

# WA Seafood Straight to Shanghai Shoppers

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# WA seafood straight to Shanghai shoppers

By Brad Thompson  
Shanghai

A former abalone diver based in Esperance has pulled off a joint venture deal to give a band of WA seafood producers direct access to shoppers in Shanghai.

Marcus Tromp brokered the deal through his friendship with Organic Ocean chief executive Haiping Hu, one of the rising stars of China's seafood industry.

Mr Hu is a seafood producer and importer with 30 stores and access to the Shanghai Free Trade Zone.

The deal was unveiled yesterday as WA abalone, rock lobster, scampi, prawns, octopus and barramundi was promoted under a unified brand at the giant Shanghai Fisheries Expo.

Abalone fishermen representing about 70 per cent of the WA quota and producing 180 tonnes a year set up export company Dragon King to buy into the joint venture with Organic Ocean.

The other WA seafood producers set to benefit are Indian Ocean Rock Lobster, Shark Bay Seafood, WA Octopus and Cone Bay Barramundi.

Mr Tromp said all had the option of buying into the joint venture if the export and retail model proved a success.



Huge cost savings: Organic Ocean boss Haiping Hu, WA Fisheries Minister Ken Baston and Dragon King general manager Marcus Tromp in Shanghai yesterday.

Frozen abalone individually packaged in Esperance were yesterday sold wholesale for about \$65 apiece inside the SFTZ while frozen lobster packaged in Cervantes retailed for \$140/kg.

Mr Tromp, general manager of Dragon King, said it was a milestone for WA seafood and opened the door to big savings in freight and WA brand recognition.

"The model we are working on is not only displaying WA seafood together but shipping together," he said.

"Once we get brand recognition containers will leave Fremantle by sea freight so we save on air freight.

"By collaborating we can save significant money on freight."

Mr Tromp said the deal was

an important step in ensuring access to the Chinese market after the WA abalone industry took a big hit under austerity measures introduced by President Xi Jinping early last year.

He said though sales to government agencies in China had dried up, sales to the private sector were recovering.